



STATE OF WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

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October 23, 2003

TO: Dennis Braddock, Secretary
Department of Social and Health Services

FROM: Marty Brown, Director

SUBJECT: Department of Social and Health Services Incident Report #03-25
Does Not Merit Review

Pursuant to RCW 43.41.370 and the Guidelines for Reporting Incidents, the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) reported to the Office of Financial Management (OFM) that on November 24, 2002, two small boys died in a mobile home fire in Sumner. There had been two prior Child Protective Services (CPS) referrals for neglect in this family more than a year before this incident.

The fire occurred while the father, who had custody of the children during a separation from their mother, was at work. Four children, aged two, six, ten and thirteen were in the mobile home at the time. The older two were burned, but managed to escape. The younger two died. It is believed that the fire was caused by a space heater with a faulty emergency shut-off switch. Since the incident, the parents have reconciled.

RCW 43.41.370(1) requires the Director of OFM to appoint a loss prevention review team when the death of a person, serious injury to a person, or other substantial loss is alleged or suspected to be caused at least in part by the actions of a state agency unless the Director, in his discretion, determines that the incident "does not merit review". Applying the criteria for loss prevention reviews, issued November 18, 2002, I have determined this incident does not merit review. DSHS conducted an internal review that concluded that the fire was accidental and not the result of neglect. While two deaths resulted from this fire, the family had no open CPS referrals at the time of the incident. An OFM review is unnecessary at this time.

This decision will be posted on the OFM website. If you have any questions about the criteria or its application to this incident, please contact either Susan Hettinger at (360) 902-9815 or Gary Robinson at (360) 902-0528.

cc: Bernie Friedman, DSHS Special Assistant Secretary, Risk Management